



AUGUST 2026

Connecting the DOTs

Fall Fair Season in South Dakota

Fairs provide a great opportunity to connect directly with the people we serve. Visitors learn about transportation projects, discover traveler resources, explore full-time and seasonal career opportunities, and ask questions.

Clay County Fair - Vermillion



Pictured are **Brad Steeneck, Junction City Highway Maintenance Supervisor (right)** and **Tyler Small, Highway Maintenance Worker**. Brad's son, Jace and wife, Ashley helped "test out" the snowplow operator cut-out.

Dakotafest - Mitchell

Pictured staffing the SDDOT booth are **Travis Schnabel, Region Bridge Technician (left)** and **Joe Sestak, Access Management Engineer**.



Second photo is **Joe Sestak (left)** with **Chad Urban, Highway Maintenance Worker, Flandreau**.



Our goal is to keep South Dakotans informed and provide meaningful opportunities to share feedback. Every conversation helps us to deliver better transportation solutions. **Thank you to SDDOT employees for representing us with professionalism and enthusiasm.** Your willingness to connect with the public reflects the very best of our organization.

**Find the SDDOT at Booth #45 in the EXPO Bldg.
South Dakota State Fair - Huron | Sept. 2-7, 2026**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2

Secretary's Corner

Page 3

2026 Employee Meetings

Page 4

SWOT Analysis for Strategic Planning

Page 5

2026 Hall of Honor Banquets

Page 6

WASHTO Emerging Leaders

Page 7

Snow Mitigation Research Project

Page 8

Safety - Snowfighter ROADEOS

Page 9

Mentoring Minute/Finance Corner

Page 10

Primavera Tips and Tricks!

Page 11

STIP Meeting Statistics

Page 12

Training Development Opportunities

Page 13-14

Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedications

Page 15

ADA Compliance/Digital Accessibility

Photo Contest

Impact Awards

Page 16-17

Kudos for our Team Members

Page 18

New Hires/Promotion/Lateral

Position Changes/ New Family

Members

Page 19-20

Miles of Service/In Sympathy

The Secretary's Corner



SDDOT Earns 2026 America's Transportation Awards:

Two SDDOT projects were recently honored as **2026 America's Transportation Awards (ATA)** competition winners within the **Western Association of State Transportation Officials (WASHTO) Region**. These awards are a testament to the work you do every day to improve safety, enhance mobility, and deliver high-quality transportation solutions. AASHTO's award program highlights the meaningful accomplishments of state DOTs and the vital role that transportation plays. Members submitted a record **127 projects** to the ATA competition in 2026.

As a regional winner, SDDOT projects will now vie for a spot on the AASHTO "Top 12 list" to be announced in early September after all regional winners have been named. The 12 finalists will compete for the Grand Prize (selected by an independent panel of judges) and the People's Choice Award (selected by public vote). Following is a short project summary and testimonial for each SDDOT award-winning application.

The Variable Speed Limit (VSL) project won in the "Best Use of Technology and Innovation, Small Project" category. The SDDOT deployed a VSL system on a 19-mile segment of Interstate 29 from S.D. Highway 32 (Flandreau) to U.S. Highway 14B at Brookings. This segment has historically experienced a higher winter crash rate.

"The VSL system on I-29 from mile marker 114 to 136 has proven to be an effective safety tool, with approximately 11 activations this winter. By adjusting speeds to match road and weather conditions, it helps reduce crash risks, prevent secondary incidents, and protect first responders and maintenance crews. **During these activations, calls for service dropped by 38% compared to a similar 20-mile stretch south of the corridor during these same time periods.** Ongoing communication between stakeholders and the DOT also helped ensure the system operated smoothly and effectively."
Captain Randi Erickson, Highway Patrol 10, District 1 Commander

The S.D. Highway 37 (Dakota Avenue) reconstruction project through Huron won in the "Safety, Medium project" category.

"The Highway 37 improvements have made a clear, positive impact on safety by switching from four traffic lanes to a two-lane design. By slowing vehicle speeds and reducing crossing distances, the roadway became more predictable and comfortable for everyone. The addition of a dedicated bike lane and extra space between parked cars reduces conflicts and improves visibility. Intersection bump outs shorten crossings and give pedestrians better sight lines, while new pedestrian signal pedestals make crossings more intuitive and secure. These improvements show how thoughtful street design can reduce crashes, protect pedestrians, and create safer, more welcoming streets for all. The City of Huron is extremely pleased with the project!" **Brett Runge, PE - City Engineer - City of Huron**

2026 Employee Meetings

The annual SDDOT employee meetings have been scheduled. The 2026 employee meetings will again include breakout sessions to allow employees an opportunity to discuss topics of interest to them.

As we've done in the past, a survey will be shared with staff members in advance of their meeting to garner questions/topics to be covered. Please know your questions and feedback help determine the most effective ways to interact and receive input from our 1,000 employees.

There will also be an update on topics and ideas raised during the 2025 employee meetings.

The four maintenance meetings will be held in conjunction with the Roadeo events this year.

Please "Save the Date" for your 2026 employee meeting . . .

- 
Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 – In Sioux Falls
1:30 - 3 p.m. (CT) – Aberdeen Region Maintenance
- 
Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026 - In Sioux Falls
2 - 3:30 p.m. (CT) – Mitchell Region Maintenance
- 
Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026 - Western Dakota Technical College in Rapid City
10 - 11:30 a.m. (MT) – Pierre Region Maintenance
- 
Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026 - Western Dakota Technical College in Rapid City
1 - 2:30 p.m. (MT) - Rapid City Region Maintenance
- 
Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2026 - Central Office Staff - Community Bible Church in Pierre
9 - 10:30 a.m. (CT)
Group #1: Secretary, Training, Legal, ITS, Project Development, Planning Administration, Local Government, Environmental, Materials & Surfacing, Internal Services, Internal Audits, Finance, Aviation Services, and Air, Rail & Transit
11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (CT) Celebrate Success Event/Lunch
2 - 3:30 p.m. (CT)
Group #2: Road Design, Right-of-Way, Transportation Inventory Management, Research, Bridge Design, Operations Administration and Operations Support
- 
Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2026 - In Pierre
10 - 11:30 a.m. (CT) – Mitchell and Aberdeen Region Field Engineering
- 
Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2026 - In Pierre
12 (Noon) -1:30 p.m. (CT) – Pierre and Rapid City Region Field Engineering

SWOT Analysis - Strategic Planning

Over the past decade, the Department has followed a version of the annual strategic planning process outlined in the graphic. Each year, we review and refine this approach using the **PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) model** to ensure continuous improvement.

The Executive Team has traditionally relied on several sources of input, including employee engagement surveys, customer satisfaction surveys, performance data, feedback from annual employee meetings, and informal conversations or manager reviews of the draft plan. While valuable, these methods have sometimes resulted in inconsistent input and missed opportunities to identify gaps or blind spots.

This year, we are expanding employee participation to better capture ideas across the Department. At the August Executive Team meeting, a group of managers and supervisors took part in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) discussion. Their insights will help shape priorities for the coming year and ensure the strategic plan reflects the realities, challenges, and needs of all regions and work units.

All employees are invited to contribute to this effort by providing input for the SWOT discussion through the following link <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/uYsGvp1amZ> or by using the QR code.

Please complete the survey by Friday, Sept. 4, 2026.

Strategic Planning - SWOT



2026 South Dakota Transportation Hall of Honor Inductees

June Hansen and Kari Karst Banquet Information

The Transportation Hall of Honor recognizes individuals who have made a lasting, valuable, and/or unique contribution to South Dakota's air, highway, public transit, or rail transportation system.

The Hall of Honor originated in 1972, and with the addition of Hansen and Karst, now includes 101 inductees.

Click on the graphic below to view the full press release featuring additional information about each 2026 Hall of Honor inductee.

SOUTH DAKOTA TRANSPORTATION Hall of Honor

2026 Inductee Banquets



June Hansen serves as the SDDOT Civil Rights Compliance Officer.



Kari Karst is the President / CEO of BX Civil & Construction, located in Dell Rapids.

June Hansen

June and Kari will be recognized by the Hall of Honor Committee for their service and commitment to South Dakota's public transportation system.

Date and Time:
Thursday, Sept. 17, 2026, 5 p.m. doors open, hearty appetizers offered. Induction program begins at 6 p.m.

Location:
Missouri Avenue Event Ctr., 217 W. Missouri Ave., Pierre

Ticket Cost / Deadline:
Tickets are \$25 per person. The deadline to purchase tickets is Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2026.

Kari Karst

June and Kari will be recognized by the Hall of Honor Committee for their service and commitment to South Dakota's public transportation system.

Date and Time:
Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026, 5:30 p.m. doors open, with 6 p.m. buffet dinner. Induction program begins at 6:30 p.m.

Location:
Riverside Event Center, 317 E. 4th St., Dell Rapids

Ticket Cost / Deadline:
Tickets are \$35 per person. The deadline to purchase tickets is Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026.

Ticket Reservations/Payment:

For additional information, or to purchase tickets for either banquet, please contact Kari Kroll, Executive Assistant, at 605-773-5105 or via email at kari.kroll@state.sd.us.

WASHTO Emerging Leaders Recognized

The WASHTO Emerging Leaders Program is designed to increase the leadership skills of high-performing employees who aspire to senior positions in transportation agencies.

The program has five goals . . .

- To improve leadership skills and knowledge;
- To provide training for future leaders;
- To build team-building skills;
- To provide networking opportunities with people in other WASHTO states; and
- To provide mentors to help the emerging leaders grow and succeed in their careers.



With Secretary Joel Jundt (left) and Operations Director Craig Smith (right) are Emerging Leaders participants and graduates (left to right): Hannah Bolton, Hailey Boese, and Rebecca Urban.

The Emerging Leader graduates were recognized during the WASHTO annual meeting held in July.

Hannah Bolton was nominated by her peers in the Emerging Leaders program to deliver the graduation speech to the WASHTO conference. Below is just a small excerpt from her speech.



“Over these two years, David and Ashley have guided us seamlessly through growing our emotional intelligence, showing us the uncomfortable truth that vulnerability is necessary to lead, and demonstrating how coaching, facilitating, and listening can create stronger, happier, more fulfilled teams. And they taught us that none of this can happen unless we first take care of ourselves—unless we’re honest about our ability to show up and truly be present.

The best part of all these tools, skills, and ideas is that we lived them. We practiced them in real time, with real—and often uncomfortable—emotion. We used real challenges we had faced or needed to face. And we honestly assessed our leadership styles, tendencies, and shortcomings with direct, immediate feedback from one another. And all the while, real life was happening around us. And there was a lot of life. In these two years, this group has seen home renovations, backpacking trips, engagements, weddings, pregnancies, babies, promotions, losses, sick loved ones, and countless other life events that occurred along the way. **And still, somehow, every one of us found a new version of ourselves— a leader we didn’t know existed.”**

Taming the Wind: Strategies for Blowing Snow Mitigation

By: Andy Vandell, Research Engineering Manager

Winter in South Dakota presents the persistent challenge of blowing and drifting snow on rural highways. Following the record-breaking 2021-2022 winter and its substantial operational costs and traveler delays, SDDOT initiated research project SD2023-06, "South Dakota Blowing Snow Mitigation Strategies, Prioritization, and Implementation". This study was designed to evaluate mitigation strategies, prioritize a list of potential locations and preferred mitigation strategies, and develop a guidance document to implement a blowing snow mitigation program in South Dakota.

A Data-Driven Approach: Researchers mapped 181 blowing snow problem areas across the state. Utilizing a data-driven scoring methodology, they prioritized the top 100 locations on rural highways based on critical variables, including maintenance staff feedback, crash history, roadway classification, and wind patterns. This ensures SDDOT resources are directed toward the areas with the highest safety and operational needs.

Tools for Mitigation: The project resulted in a comprehensive guidance document outlining various treatment options. These include:

- **Structural Snow Fences:** Permanent wooden structures like the "Wyoming style" fence.
- **Living Snow Fences (LSF):** Rows of native trees, shrubs, or standing corn rows and hay bales left in fields.
- **Grading:** Specialized earthwork to create snow storage or "snow ridging" created by equipment in adjacent fields.



Benefits to the Department and Public: Stopping snow before it hits the pavement offers a massive return on investment, with some programs showing a 17:1 benefit-to-cost ratio. By reducing the need for repeated plowing, the department saves on labor, fuel, and deicers. For South Dakota drivers, the primary benefit is improved safety; snow fences can reduce blowing snow related crashes by up to 70% and ensure rural communities maintain reliable access to emergency services.

Key Recommendations: The report outlines nine recommendations to refine future efforts. These include conducting micro-level crash analyses to identify undetected clusters and collaborating with weather providers to improve regional blowing snow models. The team also suggests developing formal landowner communication guidance, establishing clear program metrics, and improving cost estimates by incorporating snowplow routes.

The Road Ahead: The success of these programs relies on collaboration between SDDOT and local landowners. By working together to implement well-designed and well-maintained mitigation strategies, we can create better lives through better transportation.

A link to the full report can be found at <https://dot.sd.gov/programs-services/programs/research/>.

Slips, Trips, and Falls

By: Chuck Layton, Safety Manager

Slips, trips, and falls continue to be **one of the leading causes of workplace injuries across industry—and they continue to account for a significant portion of our incidents at SDDOT.** Nationally, nearly 480,000 cases resulted in days away from work in 2024. At SDDOT, our own incident experience tells a similar story: these events continue to represent a major share of the injuries we experience. That makes slips, trips, and falls more than a routine safety topic. **They are one of our most significant opportunities to prevent employees from getting hurt.**

Our exposures are also very real and very specific. SDDOT employees step in and out of trucks and heavy equipment throughout the day. We walk across gravel, uneven shoulders, shop floors, parking lots, construction areas, and changing terrain. We work around snow, ice, mud, and water. We climb steps, cross curbs, carry tools and materials, work around hoses and cords, and move between surfaces with different elevations and traction. Add South Dakota weather, bulky winter clothing, limited visibility, rushing, or simply becoming comfortable with a familiar work area, and it does not take a dramatic hazard to cause a serious injury. **Many of our slip, trip, and fall incidents occur during ordinary activities—not unusual or high-risk tasks.**

This topic will be an area of focus at this year's **SDDOT ROADEO**. We are going to use our training to look beyond the usual message of “watch where you're walking” and focus on the conditions and behaviors that are actually contributing to these incidents. Are we maintaining three points of contact getting in and out of equipment? Are we correcting snow, ice, clutter, and walking-surface hazards when we see them? Are we carrying something that blocks our view? Are we rushing or taking a shortcut? Most importantly, are we recognizing the hazard **before someone gets hurt?** Our incident numbers are telling us where an opportunity to get better exists. The ROADEO gives us the opportunity to do something about it. **See It. Correct It. Don't Walk Past It.**



The SDDOT Snowfighter Roadeos are held every other fall to give plow operators a chance to test and improve upon winter driving skills prior to the snow removal season. The driving course is a scored competition that allows drivers to test their skills against fellow drivers in their region. The top five scoring drivers in each region move onto a statewide competition held in Pierre in October.

The Roadeo events are also a great time to engage in various learning opportunities and break break-out sessions for our maintenance employees. The Snowfighter Roadeos provide staff with the opportunity to share experiences, techniques, and best practices with counterparts in other units. Equally as important, the Roadeos encourage team building for snowplow operators as they prepare for the upcoming winter season.

ROADEO photos will be available on the Intranet at <https://intranetdot.sd.gov/roadeo.aspx>.



August Mentoring Minute:
**Strengthen Your Mentoring Journey at the
 Innovation Workshop**
By: John Villbrandt and Kellie Beck

A key element of the Department's formal mentoring program is regular one-on-one interaction between mentoring pairs. These meetings can take many forms—brief check-in phone calls, shadowing opportunities, or attending meetings together.

While one-on-one meetings are the heart and soul of the mentoring relationship, group events also provide important opportunities for both mentors and mentees. These gatherings offer structured activities and collaborative exercises that encourage participants to expand their skills and contribute to shaping the future of the Department.

One such event is approaching soon. **On Sept. 15, 2026, mentoring pairs will participate in an Innovation Workshop taking place simultaneously in Pierre, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls.** Running from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. CDT (9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. MDT), this workshop invites participants to brainstorm and develop new ideas for SDDOT Research Projects, general innovation initiatives, and innovative process development. All individuals currently enrolled in the mentoring program are encouraged to register for the location most convenient for them.

This event is a great example of an opportunity for mentoring partners to directly influence the direction of the organization and contribute to meaningful innovation within the Department.

Make a difference in SDDOT..... Make Time for Mentoring.



Finance Corner

EMPLOYEE TRAVEL - 3rd PARTY VENDORS

The office of the State Auditor strongly discourages the use of 3rd party vendors (such as Expedia and Priceline) for employee travel arrangements including airfare, lodging, car rentals, etc.

These services often do not provide itemized receipts. Without the breakdown of charges, the State Auditor cannot guarantee that the full amount will be reimbursed. Fees such as booking or service charges are not reimbursable.

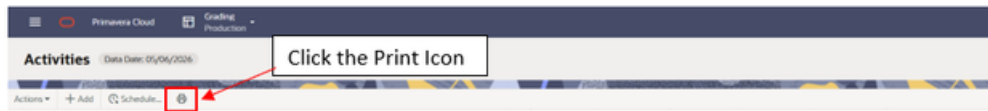
DIRECT HOTEL BILLS: If your office receives a hotel bill for a SDDOT employee who is not in your office/unit, please make sure to forward the bill on to the appropriate secretarial staff for processing.

Primavera Tips/Tricks - How to Layout/Gantt Chart

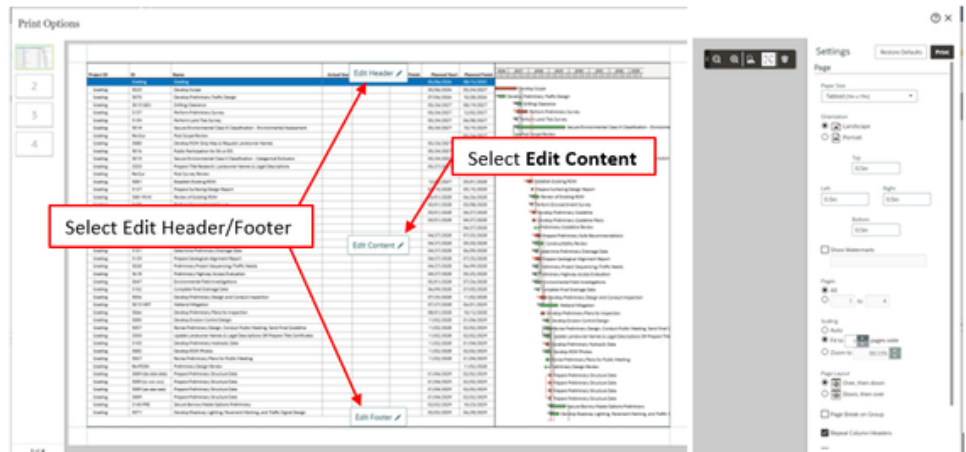
SDDOT utilizes Primavera Cloud, which is a cloud-based scheduling software for the design phase of a project. Additionally, Primavera Cloud is utilized for various aspects of project management to help with managing resource workloads (current and future) and to assist in the delivery of projects in a timely matter.

This tip demonstrates how to **Print Layout/Gantt Chart** in Primavera Cloud.

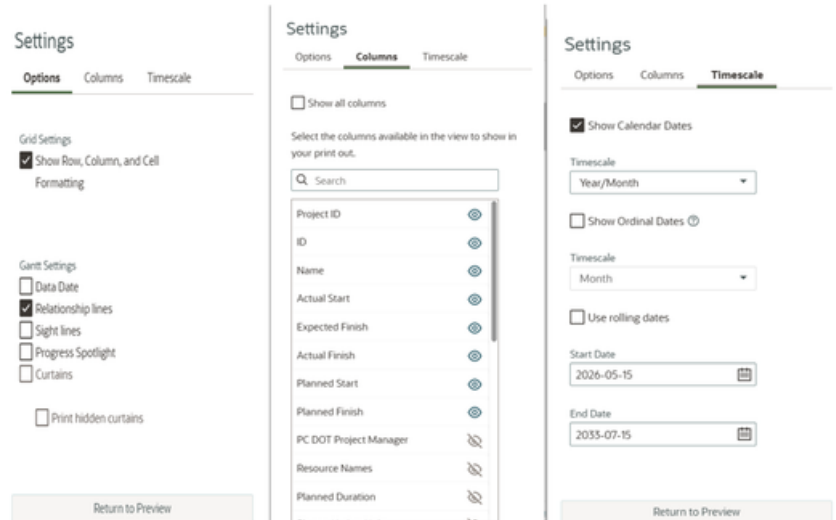
1. On the **Activities Page**, select the **Print Icon**.



2. On the following screen you will choose your print options.
 - a. To change the print layout, select **Edit Content**
 - a. If you want to add a header select **Edit Header/Footer**



3. On the **Edit Content** Screen, it will show **Options, Columns, and Timescale**:
 - a. Under **Options**, you can change your preferences
 - b. Under **Columns**, you can adjust the columns that you want displayed
 - c. Under **Timescale**, you can adjust what is displayed on the Gantt Chart



4. When you have made your selections, select **Print**. You will have the option to send to the printer or print to pdf.
5. This will work on the **Project Page**, but with more limited options.
6. If all else fails, call us.

If you have questions about the Primavera Cloud software, please reach out to the Project Delivery Team.

Earl Berg (Earl.Berg@state.sd.us or 773-7191)

Kathryn Faubel (Kathryn.Faubel@state.sd.us or 773-3567)

Tentative 2027-2030 STIP Public Meeting Metrics



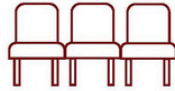
The SDDOT offered virtual and in-person public engagement options for the Tentative 2027-2030 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

STIP information was available through the virtual meeting room on the SDDOT website at <https://dot.sd.gov/projects-studies/planning/tentative-statewide-transportation-improvement-program-stip>.

In-Person STIP Meetings

Virtual and corresponding in-person meeting options are now the way in which we engage with the public.

The day time meeting had over **2X** the in-person attendees when compared to the nighttime option.



7.5 Average In-Person 2026 STIP Meeting Attendance
38 Average Online 2026 STIP Zoom Meeting Attendance

STIP Meeting Attendance

In person: 15
Zoom: 76
Total: 91
July 14, 2026
• 64 attendees
July 16, 2026
• 27 attendees

Unique Users: **464**
Unique Virtual Meeting Room Users: **77**
Avg. Time Spent on Site: **7 seconds**



Virtual Room

In the virtual room, visitors are able to join two Zoom meetings live or on demand.

Top 3 Visited Areas:
1) Mitchell Region 2) Rapid Region
3) Aberdeen Region



A Hub of Info

The SDDOT provides accessible STIP information found at <https://shorturl.at/hroS7>.

Facebook referrals to the STIP website increased **4X** the amount from 2025.

STIP Website Analytics

Web data: June 1, 2026 to Aug. 5, 2026

Direct - 356 views
Google - 278 views
Bing - 42 views
Facebook - 399 views

2026 Total: 1,075 views (759 users)
2025 Total: 465 views (347 users)



In-person and virtual meetings were held on:
Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 2 p.m. CT/1 p.m. MT | Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 7 p.m. CT/6 p.m. MT.



Facebook Engagement

Campaign: June 25, 2026, to July 27, 2026.

Total Posts: 7
Total Reactions: 47
Total Comments: 4
Total Views: 19,516



STIP information posted on platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and X have experienced a substantial increase in viewership and exposure.

Audiences want to view important information and provide comment on their own timeframe.

Virtual Options

Comments

Comments from the public were available to be made until Friday, July 31, 2026.

126 total comments

- 68 verbally from the Planning Districts and Public STIP meetings
- 58 received via written format



- The daytime in-person meeting had more than double the attendance of the evening in-person meeting option.
- Zoom attendance was the primary way people participated in the two meetings, this year the in-person option was offered for both the daytime and evening meetings.
- Digital engagement grew as STIP-related posts across social media platforms reached more than **19,000 views**.
- Public feedback remained strong, with **126 official comments submitted** verbally or in writing.
- Increased website traffic further reflected growing public interest in transportation planning and project transparency.

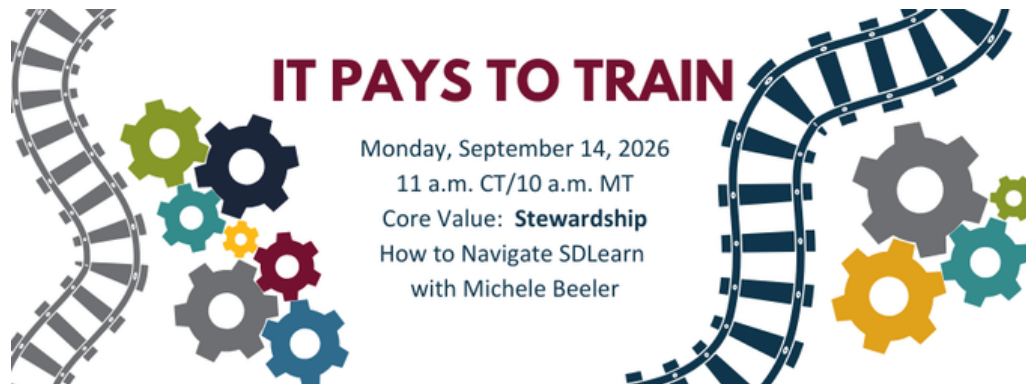
Through combined traditional and digital outreach, the SDDOT continues to make STIP information accessible statewide and encourages meaningful public participation in shaping South Dakota's public transportation system. **The Tentative 2027-2030 STIP will be formally presented to the Transportation Commission for review and approval at the meeting scheduled for Aug. 27, 2026.**

Training & Development Opportunities

Learn ~ Engage ~ Improve

Simplified coding is available for ALL training courses!

Use function 1175; no AFE needed!



Upcoming in-person courses:

- NHI 135048 Countermeasure Design for Bridge Scour and Stream Instability
 - Sept. 22-24, 2026 | 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. CT | Pierre
- NHI 130053 Bridge Inspection Refresher Course
 - Sept. 29 – Oct. 1, 2026 | 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. CT | Sioux Falls
- NHI 133149 Advanced Work Zone Management & Design
 - Dec. 9 - 10, 2026 | Sioux Falls

Upcoming Webinars

- TLN: Data-Driven Inspection Planning for Utah Culverts Using Federated Learning
 - Aug. 26 | 2:30 p.m. CT/1:30 p.m. MT | Zoom
- TLN: Carbide Crisis - Understanding the Impact on Snowplow Cutting Edges
 - Sept. 8 | 2:00 p.m. CT/1 p.m. MT | Zoom
- TLN: Assessment of Safety & Operation Performances of CFIs & DDIs in Utah
 - Sept. 16 | 9:30 a.m. CT/8:30 a.m. MT | Zoom
- TLN: Improving Compatibility of Truck Platooning with Existing Infrastructure via Development of Dynamic Operational Rules on Highway Networks
 - Sept. 23 | 9:30 a.m. CT/8:30 a.m. MT | Zoom
- TLN: Courageous Leadership - Living a Life of Influence
 - Oct. 28 | 9:30 a.m. CT/8:30 a.m. MT | Zoom

New Online Courses:

- Portable Dynamic Message Signs (PDMS): Setup, Placement, and Messaging
- Beckett Instructional Training Videos, a playlist course for commonly used equipment
- IPT August 2026 Core Value: Ethics with Karla Engle

Click on the SDLearn graphic or use this link to sign in: [SDLearn](#)



Search by the **complete course name** listed.

2026 South Dakota Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedications

PVT George Thares - Dedication ceremony was held July 31, 2026, in Mobridge. Drew Ruedebusch (right) was a long-time surveyor for Mobridge Area DOT. He retired last December. His wife, Patty (middle) was Private George Thares's niece. Their daughter Toma (left) delivered the family message at the event.

In early August, SDDOT crews installed the sign on U.S. Highway 12 just west of Mobridge.

The family's military service runs deep, as Drew served in the US Army and South Dakota National Guard, while Toma served in the US Army Reserves.



On Aug. 15, 2026 - Friends and family gathered to honor the life and sacrifice of PFC Vern Harris, who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1968.

The dedication of the bridge west of Isabel serves as a lasting reminder of his courage, service, and the ultimate sacrifice he made for our country.



2026 South Dakota Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedications

CPL Lawrence D. Brownotter – A dedication ceremony was held on Aug. 16, 2026, in Bullhead to honor U.S. Army Corporal Lawrence D. Brownotter. The event took place at the V-J Day Celebration Arena, where community members and guests gathered to recognize Brownotter's service and sacrifice.

The S.D. Highway 65 bridge over the Grand River, south of McIntosh, now bears his name. The dedication stands as a lasting tribute to his honor and distinction, ensuring his legacy continues to inspire all who travel this roadway.



1LT Laurence Radlinger – A dedication ceremony was held on Aug. 17, 2026, in Rapid City to honor U.S. Air Force 1st Lieutenant Laurence E. Radlinger. Community members gathered at the Minneluzahan Senior Citizen center for the event, which highlighted Radlinger's distinguished service and lasting impact.

The S.D. Highway 16B bridge in Rapid City now bears his name. This dedication is part of a statewide initiative recognizing service members who gave so much to our nation, and stands as a tribute that will endure for generations.

1LT Radlinger served with honor and distinction, and the newly dedicated bridge ensures his legacy continues to inspire all who travel this roadway.



Find additional information about Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication ceremonies on the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs website at <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/default.aspx>.



ADA Compliance/Digital Accessibility Resources and Guidelines

As of April 24, 2027, all government agencies will be required to follow the [Department of Justice guidelines](#) requiring any document and content on public-facing websites to be accessible. This timeline was adjusted by the DOJ from 2026 to 2027. **Thank you to everyone who has continued efforts toward remediation of existing SDDOT website content; as well as ensuring new documents to be placed on the SDDOT public website are ADA compliant.**

The **Digital ADA One-Stop resource page** is available on the Intranet at https://intranetdot.sd.gov/SDDOT_Branding.aspx to provide training, templates, guidance, and the progress tracker (listed by program). If you need access to the SharePoint site, please contact the communication team. Thank you for helping us provide equal access to all on our SDDOT website.

Reminder: BIT provides monthly SDDOT IT system-related updates. As available, these updates are posted on the Intranet at [intranetdot.sd.gov/BIT IT Development Updates](https://intranetdot.sd.gov/BIT_IT_Development_Updates).

The monthly KDSR is your go-to resource to stay informed about BISON. Access the latest Bison news at [Aug. 2026 KDSR](#)

If you have questions or feedback, reach out to the BISON team at BISON@state.sd.us.



BISON KDSR (Know, Do, Share, Report Back)

2nd Annual "Picture the SDDOT" Photo Contest



Picture the SDDOT submission deadline is Friday, Nov. 13, 2026. The contest features photos submitted by and voted upon by SDDOT staff.

Submit photos [here](#) or scan the QR Code!

Contest information is also available on the Intranet at ["Picture the SDDOT"](#).

Impact Awards and Kudos Board

Click on the graphic to access the nomination form.

The [Impact Award Informational Flyer](#) provides more details.

Recognize the hard work of your co-workers through an **Impact Award**. Don't forget to give them a "shout out" on the **Kudos Board** on the Intranet.

KUDOS BOARD

[VIEW AND POST](#)



2026 IMPACT AWARDS

Submit a nomination for a team or an individual who has gone above and beyond in demonstrating the Department's mission and vision!

KUDOS From Highway Patrol

Pictured are members of the Mitchell region maintenance and equipment repair staff (**Nick Novak, Ryan Degen, Levi Balcom, Corey Weerheim**) with Trooper Taylor Mohr.



I am writing to recognize the generosity, professionalism, and outstanding service consistently demonstrated by the employees at the Mitchell Department of Transportation shop.

I have served as a South Dakota Highway Patrol Trooper in the Mitchell area for many years, and during that time I have experienced countless examples of the DOT employees' willingness to help. Whether assisting with equipment issues, vehicle maintenance, or supporting our training needs, they have always been dependable and eager to lend a hand.

In the past, **Ryan Degen, Levi Balcom, and Nick Novak** have assisted with patrol vehicles whenever mechanical issues arose. Their knowledge, responsiveness, and willingness to help have been invaluable. Their supervisor, Steve Rhoades, has also been exceptionally supportive, always ensuring we have what we need for training and never hesitating to offer assistance whenever requested.

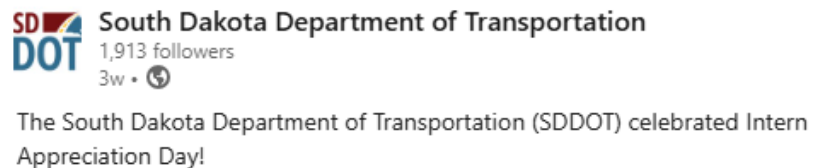
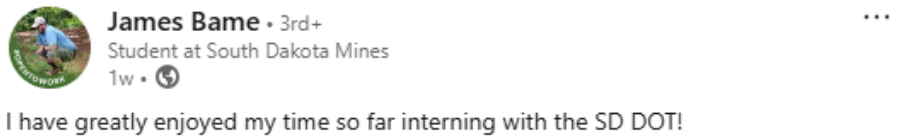
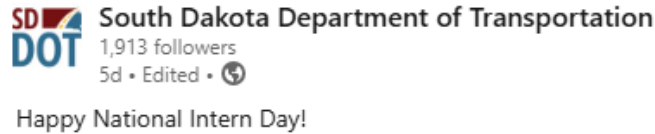
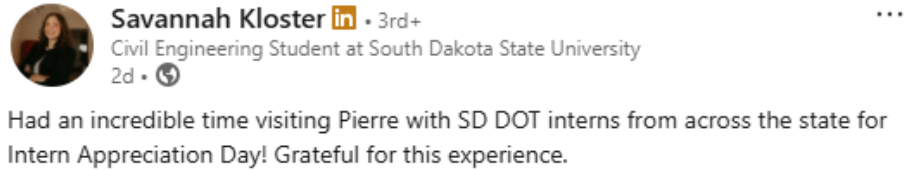
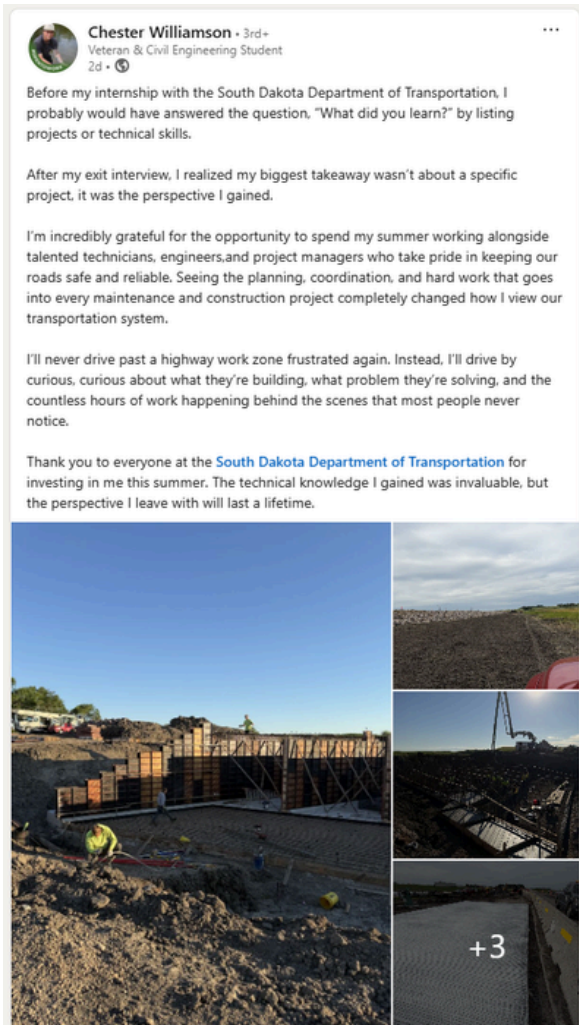
Most recently, **Corey Weerheim** went above and beyond when I experienced a flat tire on my patrol vehicle. Without hesitation, he helped replace the tire and even took the extra step of delivering the damaged tire to a local repair shop so it could be repaired. His selflessness and initiative exemplify the outstanding character of the Mitchell DOT team.

It is always a pleasure working with the employees at the Mitchell DOT shop. They consistently greet us with a positive attitude and are always willing to provide assistance whenever it is needed. Their dedication, teamwork, and commitment to supporting the South Dakota Highway Patrol do not go unnoticed, and we are sincerely grateful for everything they do for the Troopers assigned to the PSD Central Squad. Please extend my heartfelt appreciation to the entire Mitchell DOT team for their continued support and exceptional service. They are a tremendous asset to both the Department of Transportation and the State of South Dakota.

Troopers Deanna Johnson and Taylor Mohr
Police Service Dog Central Squad - South Dakota Highway Patrol

KUDOS

SDDOT interns show appreciation for the Department through LinkedIn posts.



KUDOS

"Wanted to express our thanks to the two DOT staff that assisted with this. We appreciate the assistance of your team."

-Brenda Tidball-Zeltinger, Deputy Secretary - Department of Social Services

On Aug. 3, 2026, a Department of Social Services employee was driving a state vehicle on I-90 westbound between mile marker 42 and 43. The vehicle began shaking and wobbling. At that point the driver side front tire came off and rolled/bounced into the ditch of the eastbound lane. She pulled all the way over and stopped. She called 911.

Two DOT employees (Tom Ascher and Bryan Wellman, Rapid City Highway Maintenance Workers) assisted Corinda in getting the tire and waiting with her until Highway Patrol arrived.

August New Hires:

Walter Haag, Highway Maintenance Worker - Pierre
 Jesse Knittel, Highway Maintenance Worker - Aberdeen
 Richard Gednalske, Highway Maintenance Worker - Custer
 Ken Lawrence, Construction Technician - Rapid City
 Kirk Hvam, Highway Maintenance Worker - Redfield
 Tucker Wuertzer, Construction Technician - Rapid City
 Jackson Ottenbacher, Transportation Analyst (Pavement Evaluation Equipment Operator) - Pierre
 Tye Martin, Construction Technician (Driller) - Pierre

August Promotions/Lateral Position Updates:

Jonathan Egge, Engineer I (Pierre Region Design Engineer)
 Julie Stevenson, Toward Zero Deaths Coordinator



New Family Members:

Tatum Nicole Heiser was born on July 30, 2026, to Tanner and Tawny Heiser of Watertown.

Tatum is the granddaughter of **Winner Area Engineer, Doug Sherman** and his wife Val. This is their **16th grandchild**. Tatum is pictured with her grandparents and siblings Taya, Thea, and Tess.



Check below for a “Sherman grandchild count” update . . .



Mari Taylor Brusven was born on Aug. 3, 2026 to **Taylor Brusven (Communications Specialist)** and husband, Cole.

Mari weighed 7 lbs. 12 oz. and was 20 inches long.



Tom Druyvestein, Road Design Engineering Supervisor (along with his wife, Chintal and son, Dilan) welcomed Sonali Diya Druyvestein.

Sonali was born on Aug. 9, 2026, weighing 6 lbs. 1 oz.



Rhodes Joseph Sherman was born on Aug. 11, 2026, to Todd and Meghan Sherman of Council Bluffs, IA.

Rhodes is the grandson of **Val and Doug Sherman (Winner Area Engineer)** and is their **17th grandchild**.

Rhodes is pictured with his siblings Kade, Kasey, Jaxon, and Jameson.

August Longevity:

Randy Vesely, Survey Crew Chief – 40 years (Winner Area)

Stacy Parmely, Accountant II – 25 years (Central Office – Accounting)

Miles of Service Recognitions:

Photos feature those who celebrated longevity recognition in July and August.

Randy Vesely, Winner Area Survey Crew Chief, (right) received his 40-year longevity pin and plaque from Brad Norrid, Winner Area Engineering Manager.



John Matthesen, Belle Fourche Area Engineer, (left) received his 35-year longevity pin and plaque from Todd Seaman, Rapid City Region Engineer.

Steve Palmer, Rapid City Area Engineering Supervisor, (left) received his 30-year longevity pin and plaque from Mike Carlson, Rapid City Area Engineer.



Stacy Parmely, Accountant II - Finance & Management (Pierre), (left) received her 25-year longevity pin from Patti Devitt, Accounting Manager.

Longevity Continued . . .

Thomas Barrera, Highway Maintenance Worker in Newell, (right) received his 10-year longevity pin from Rick Walton, Belle Fourche Highway Maintenance Supervisor.



Jordan Pierce, Material Lab Tech in Pierre, received his 10-year longevity pin from Tom Grannes, Materials Engineer Manager.



Shane Brick, Equipment Technician in Aberdeen, (left) received is 10-year longevity pin from Jeff Walz, Aberdeen Equipment Shop Foreman.



Chet Collins, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker in Isabel (left) received his 10-year longevity pin from Raymond Jones, Highway Maintenance Supervisor (Eagle Butte).



Retirements:

Brian Hipple is retiring on Sept. 8, 2026. Brian worked in the Central Materials Lab/Materials and Surfacing office for 25+ years. Congratulations Brian!



In Sympathy:



Sympathy is extended to the family, friends, and co-workers of Jeff Bryant.

Jeff, a long-time state employee and former Lead Worker in Faulkton passed away on Aug. 10, 2026.

Funeral services were held on Aug. 14, 2026, at the United Church of Faulkton. Burial followed in the Faulkton Cemetery.